United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- General Assembly establishes position of United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator to strengthen humanitarian emergency assistance and ensure rapid response to crises.

- Secretary-General calls on all parties in El Salvador talks to keep negotiations private; says public debate at this stage will only "harden positions".

- European Economic Community informs United Nations of guidelines on recognition of new States in Eastern Europe and Soviet Union, adopted at ministerial meeting in Brussels on 16 December.

- Consequences of recent changes in Soviet Union for representation at United Nations discussed at press conference at Headquarters.

- Sixth United Nations ballistic missile inspection team verifies destruction of launch sites and "Super-gun" in Iraq.

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The General Assembly this morning established the position of a United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator, to be appointed by the Secretary-General. It instructed the Secretary-General to establish a central emergency revolving fund, in order to strengthen the coordination of the United Nations humanitarian emergency assistance and ensure a rapid response to crises.

The resolution, adopted without a vote, contains guiding principles for improving the United Nations response to a wide range of international emergencies. The new Office of Emergency Relief Coordinator will be supported by a secretariat based on a strengthened Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator and the consolidation of existing offices that deal with complex emergencies.

According to the text, introduced by the representative of Sweden, the emergency fund, proposed at $50 million, will be financed by voluntary

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contributions. The Secretary-General is asked to launch an appeal to potential donors and convene a meeting of those donors early in 1992.

Addressing the Assembly, Jan Eliasson (Sweden) and Chairman of the ad hoc group for informal consultations on the humanitarian assistance agenda item, introduced, on behalf of the group, the draft resolution on strengthening the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations.

He said the draft underlined the central and unique role of the United Nations in providing leadership and coordinating the efforts of the international community to support the affected countries. Member States had recognized their responsibility to deal decisively with a concrete and crucial item on the United Nations agenda. That augured well for the Organization, not only in the provision of humanitarian assistance, but also in furthering its work in the economic, social and environmental fields.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar today urged the parties in the talks between the Government of El Savador and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional to avoid public debate at this stage in negotiations, which he hoped would be the final one.

The Secretary-General said in a statement that it was necessary that all representatives of the parties, and not just the negotiating teams, ensure that the negotiation is carried out in its proper place, and that they make a special effort to keep the debate private.

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said he was prepared to make "a great effort" so as to put the solution to the conflict in El Salvador on an irreversible course to conclusion, during the remainder of his mandate as Secretary-General. He expressed hope that he could count on the full co-operation of the parties to the negotiation.

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The European Economic Community (EEC) has informed the United Nations of a set of "guidelines on the recognition of new States in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union", which it adopted at its ministerial meeting in Brussels on 16 December.

The guidelines were transmitted in a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 17 December, in which the 12 European States said they had invited all Yugoslav republics to state by 23 December whether they wished to be recognized as independent States and if so, whether they accepted the provisions laid down in the draft convention. Such a convention is currently under consideration by the Hague Conference on Yugoslavia, led by Lord Carrington.

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The Yugoslav republics were also invited to state whether they continued to support the efforts of the Secretary-General and the Security Council and the continuation of the Conference on Yugoslavia.

The EEC further required each of the Yugoslav Republics to commit themselves, prior to recognition, to adopt constitutional and political guarantees ensuring that they have no territorial claim towards a neighbouring community State.

In the letter, the European Community asked the Secretary-General and the Security Council to continue efforts to establish an effective cease-fire and promote a peaceful and negotiated outcome to the conflict. They said they attached the greatest importance to the early deployment of a United Nations peace-keeping force.

The letter was signed by three European Permanent Representatives to the United Nation, Paul Noterdaeme of Belgium, Jean-Bernard Merimée of France and Sir David Hannay of the United Kingdom.

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The question of future representation of the Soviet Union at the world Organization after its dissolution was discussed today at a press conference at Headquarters, sponsored by the Ukrainian Mission to the United Nations.

Speaking about the implications for the United Nations, Richard N. Gardner, Chairman of the United States side of a United States-Soviet Working Group, said it was up to the peoples of the Soviet Union to decide what the future status of the country would be.

Addressing the immediate consequences, Mr. Gardner said there was "no Soviet Union to sit in the Security Council" as of 31 December, and "that creates a crisis", since the Council could not go on with only 14 members. The seat was vacant, he said, giving other countries like Brazil, Japan, India and Germany the opportunity to question their rights to occupy a seat in the Council.

A commonwealth of Soviet States would not be eligible for membership in the Security Council, he said, adding that other unions or communities might also be interested in a Security Council seat if a Soviet commonwealth was permitted as a Permanent Member.

The most likely solution would be to have the Republic of Russia substitute the Soviet Union in the Council, Mr. Gardner said, since Russia was the continuation of the Soviet Union, with a new name and a new geography being the only difference.

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The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has informed the Secretary-General of "further attacks by

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the Israeli Government and settlers against Holy Places and Palestinian property in East Jerusalem and adjoining neighbourhoods".

In a letter, dated 16 December, Committee Chairman Absa Claude Diallo expressed "the gravest concern" at Israel's "violation of its obligations as the occupying Power" under the 1949 Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians in time of war. She appealed to the Secretary-General and all the parties concerned to see that all necessary measures are taken in order to induce Israel to put an end to its illegal settlement activities and ensure respect for Holy Places.

Ms.Diallo yesterday announced her departure from the post drawing attention to the Committee's "tireless and devoted efforts" which she said, had now begun to bear fruit. Ms. Diallo, who is from Senegal, informed the Committee that that she had been called by her Government to take up other duties and would be leaving New York at the end of the week.

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A team of 11 United Nations inspectors from 10 countries recently returned from Iraq, where it verified the destruction of fixed launch sites of ballistic missiles as well as of components of the so-called "super-gun".

In inspecting components of the 1000-millimetre "super-gun", the team found that 22 barrel sections and some hydraulic buffers had not been destroyed according to the specifications laid down by a previous inspection team. Iraqi Army personnel were requested to destroy the components as directed, which was done and subsequently verified.

At a site south of Baghdad, the inspectors found two trailers used for transporting Al Hussein and SCUD missiles that had previously been destroyed, but had been welded together again and outfitted to carry shorter-range Frog-7 missiles, which are not required to be destroyed under the terms of the cease-fire resolution. The team requested that those trailers be demolished, and accepted an Iraqi proposal that the two altered trailers, as well as six unaltered ones, be blown up with explosives.

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